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NO HUMANITY FOR GERMANS

by Oswald Garrison Villard

It should be obvious that the failure of the Foreign Ministers to create even a basis for an approach to a peace with Germany has intensified the miseries, the psychological sufferings and the growing hopelessness of the German people. But Secretary Marshall has yet to emphasize this simple humanitarian aspect of the tragedy.

This is the more regrettable because the Secretary of State did say, in his comment on April 28, 1947, on the similar failure of the Moscow Conference: "The patient is sinking while the doctors deliberate. So I believe that action cannot await compromise through exhaustion." Moreover, Secretary Marshall has discussed the horrible situation of the Chinese masses, after years of starvation, revolution and warfare, with an appreciation of what this has meant to those pitiful people.

But the Secretary wound up his radio report of December 19, on the utter failure of the London Conference, without a single word as to where this failure left Germany, or as to the outlook for another move.

He merely said: "I fear there can be no settlement until the coming months demonstrate whether or not the civilization of Western Europe will prove vigorous enough to rise above the destructive effects of the war and to restore a healthy society," and that "the situation must be stabilized" before any other attempt to solve the impasse. He gave no encouragement to the suffering and half-fed Germans and Austrians to hold out, or to believe that the state of war in which they are still kept will be terminated -- not even in the face of the increasing signs of desperation among a literally starving people.

The patient may continue to sink; the doctors have ceased even to deliberate. They seem content to slang each other across the dying body.

This policy of drift means a continuing refusal to reintegrate our conquered subjects into the life of what used to be called "One World". The Germans remain Beyond the Pale. They cannot send cables or radio messages, or use the telephone for any communications outside their existing frontiers. The airmails are closed to them, though they may receive air-borne letters, but these can only be answered by the regular

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mails which are four weeks or longer in transit to the United States. All mail remains liable to wartime censorship, and the ensuing delays, although hostilities ceased in the early summer of 1945.

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Germans cannot receive from abroad any monies, large or small -- not even from friends and relatives overseas -- even though the large sums which would pour in would considerably improve conditions and cut down our government's expenditures.

As a result the Germans cannot purchase foreign books, magazines or newspapers. Very few American publications seep in, while their own censored press remains inevitably inefficient and inadequate in the presentation of news and the molding of a free public opinion.

All our efforts at de-Nazification and democratization are thwarted by the lack of materials for extensive assistance to schools, to adult education through the labor unions and otherwise, and because we are withholding the very books and newspapers which would familiarize the Germans with our attitudes, policies and democratic processes. If our government would but lower the high postal rate charged on food and clothing parcels and remove the present limit on weight (22 pounds), there would be a still greater volume of relief shipments by Americans.

Worst of all, the Germans and Austrians cannot buy hospital equipment or supplies -- even such articles as rubber operating gloves and toilet essentials -- or the necessary drugs. If they receive some -- but not enough -- penicillin and streptomycin, it is in part because our Military Government is fearful that venereal and other contagious diseases may spread to infect our troops.

Travel is almost an impossibility for any German. Even merchants and salesmen are gravely restricted, despite the Military Government's assertions that it is bent on building up the economy of "Bizonia". It is extremely difficult for any German to get permission to cross into Switzerland, though the Swiss Government raises no particular objections. There is a case on record of an elderly woman, seeking a permit to visit Switzerland, who was accused by an American colonel of trying to avoid the "Hunger Punishment".

Again, the Germans cannot understand why anti-Hitler refugees in this country, even men who served in the American army during the entire war, are frequently refused permission to return to Germany and help to rebuild their country along democratic lines. They are cut off by a Brass Curtain, as impenetrable as Russia's one of iron.

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Two facts stand out clearly in this picture. One is that to alter the conditions cited as controlling in our zone requires no further conference of Foreign Ministers, nor any other step beyond a decision by the President to take such action, especially as we have now voluntarily assumed one-half of Britain's expenses in maintaining its zone.

President Truman could certainly order the necessary postal changes, end the ban on airmail, permit the use of the cables, and insist that the American banks now established in Germany be allowed to do business with the Germans instead of only with the occupying forces. This improvement would require only one stroke of the Chief Executive's pen, and the recall of officers now devoting their time to the intricacies of red tape would improve the present desperate housing conditions. So would a further reduction of garrisons which offer no threat to the Russians and are not needed to hold down the unarmed Germans.

One word from the White House to the Army, and the State Department would end its stubborn refusal to allow the return of the anti-Nazi refugees and would make possible the importation of the needed drugs. The Postmaster General can regulate the size of the packages to be sent abroad and the rate to be charged for them. If the President should desire the "Bizonians" to have access to all American books, magazines and newspapers it would not be difficult to make the necessary currency changes to enable the free import of American intellectual material.

There is an even more important step which Mr. Truman could take if he desired to influence the German mentality in the direction of the democracies and against the Communism of the East. There are still over three million prisoners of war in captivity, in violation of the laws of war and of the Geneva Convention; forced to work for beggarly pay in involuntary servitude. For some of this slave labor the United States is morally responsible since it "loaned" German prisoners to the French and British Governments after the surrender.

In 1947, in response to proddings from the International Red Cross, the United States demanded of France the release of the numerous prisoners in that country, with a resultant promise, according to the press, that they would be set free last fall. The Red Cross has again protested against the continued enslavement of many of these men -- an unprecedented outrage of every principle for which America stands.

Millions of Germans have a direct or indirect interest in these "loaned" prisoners. The longer the prisoners are detained, contrary to law and to human decency, the more the German public will regard as pure hypocrisy American assertions that ours is a Christian country, and therefore spiritually and ethically fitted to reform German thinking.

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In two speeches prior to the London Conference, General Marshall exalted with true American modesty the complete altruism and unselfishness of our foreign policy. Always, he suggested, it has been wholly just and actuated by the highest motives -- forgetting the Mexican War (denounced in 1885 by General Grant as "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation"); and our attack on Spain.

Such self-laudatory interpretations of our history are not only contrary to truth; they do violence to the best in our American traditions. And the tendency to gloss what we are doing with hypocrisy is the second important fact in the present status of our relations to Germany and Austria.

Hypocrisy is attested by the severe criticisms of our policies and their results, as voiced by returning soldiers, civilian officials and journalists -- Whitelaw Reid, Editor of the New York Herald-Tribune, declares that German conditions under our flag are "sub-human".

Letting the patient live -- or die if he can -- goes counter to our historic policy of generous aid to any and all peoples in distress, to the spirit of General Grant at Appomattox, to our consideration for the Filipinos after the conquest, to that most praiseworthy Good-Neighbor policy acclaimed by Franklin Roosevelt, to every one of the democratic and humanitarian ideals which were voiced as our reason and our purpose in entering the war. Our sadistic policy in Germany is also contrary to every teaching of history. Nobility begets nobility, and generosity, generosity. This is what the Secretary of State must remember if he wishes to make American foreign policy of today conform to what he thinks and asserts it has been in the past.

There lies a surer road to the restoration of goodwill, true peace and prosperity for all Europe, than the present frantic effort to purchase safety for democratic institutions with dollars. The present turn of events in Germany shows that even if the patient can be resuscitated at the last moment, he is all too likely to hate those who sanctimoniously preached the outlawry of war, and ended up by demanding the outlawry of charity for a fallen foe.

Oswald Garrison Villard, an occasional contributor to HUMAN EVENTS, is famous as the Dean of American humanitarians.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. V, NO. 3

By Frank C. Hanighen January 21, 1948

Mr. Norman Thomas dropped into the office the other day and we put to him the following question: "How great is Wallace's strength?" Mr. Thomas has an encyclopedic knowledge of Left geography, and as a perennial Socialist candidate for President we have always found his judgment impartial, in assessing trends affecting the two major parties. His answer commands attention:

If the election were held tomorrow, Wallace would win at least four million votes throughout the country; including at least 350,000 in New York. His popularity in the Empire State is far greater today than most observers estimate. The newspaper PM received an impressive mail of protest when the Editor, Max Lerner, attacked the Wallace candidacy and urged support of Truman. The Wallace strength, in an election held tomorrow, would effectively insure Truman's defeat.

However, that is only for tomorrow. By fall, the situation may have developed quite differently. Wallace is his own worst enemy. He habitually talks too much and too loosely. Unless he is well managed and coached, he will probably alienate many among those now inclined to support him. Next, the Communist backing will probably become much more evident to many voters as time goes on; numerous Labor voters, now in the Wallace fold, would then be driven back into the Democratic ranks. It would be hazardous if the GOP relied too heavily on the Wallace defection to insure Truman's defeat. The Republicans cannot exercise too much care in selecting a candidate. General Eisenhower is the only GOP hopeful now visible in the field who, if nominated, would seem certain to beat Truman.

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If General MacArthur enters the political arena this spring, there are many arguments as to his potential assets and liabilities in the domestic scene: whether a General starts with an advantage or not; whether this general is too old; etc. But one possibility is rarely raised: that there may take place a deterioration in the Japanese situation which would have repercussions on the General's high reputation as an administrator. The fact is that some observers, well disposed to the General, believe that the Japanese situation is fraught with danger, and not alone to the General.

MacArthur has had to work within the framework of directives from Washington, and has had to depend on bureaucrats sent from Washington. And while he has been able to moderate or postpone many stupid or vengeful directives, and much maladministration by his bureaucracy, he has not conquered all such obstacles. Nor could he alter the precarious post-war economic position of the country.

Inflation, an artificial currency situation, lack of the foreign trade which formerly supported the economic structure, etc. are but parts of a probably insoluble economic problem. Many doubt that Japan can possibly recover because rich Manchuria, with which Japanese economy came to be integrated, has now been cut off. Additionally, much blame is placed on the Reparations Commission which has held a Damoclean sword over an industry struggling already against overwhelming odds.

The "New Deal" bureaucrats who moved into Tokyo also reportedly have their responsibility for the situation. They have pushed the purge of many able business men and firms upon which the economy has in the past depended. Finally Communist elements in the CIO early encouraged their fellow comrades in Japan to take over an important part of the Labor movement. The Japan CIO shows all the earmarks of Moscow direction. While the number of Japanese Communists is not apparently formidable, infiltration has made much progress. The threat of a general strike

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(ordered by these Communist elements in the JCIO) a year ago is still remembered. General MacArthur promptly squelched the strike.

But, supposing the General retires and some other General less gifted and firm succeeds him? In such an event, a crisis may take an ugly turn, and the effects on the General's candidacy (if he should stand for Presidential nomination) might be unpleasant. Anyway, some of his supporters are worried.

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In these pages it has been frequently suggested that while the Morgenthau Plan has been officially repudiated the spirit lives on in our government of Germany and the methods of our Occupation authorities constitute at best only a slightly modified version of the Plan. We therefore offer the following confirming evidence.

Mr. Ernest T. Weir, Chairman of the National Steel Corporation, recently returned from a trip in Europe and released an interesting memorandum embodying his observations. In one part he says: "The Morgenthau Plan as applied in Germany by our country was one of the great crimes of history. The report of Mr. Hoover, which was endorsed by the group of American businessmen that was sent to Germany, showed plainly what must be done. The administration in Washington stated some time ago that they were putting this into effect. This is a complete misrepresentation to the people of this country because nothing has been done, so far as I can find. The slightly amended Morgenthau Plan is still in control." (Our emphasis.)

It may be objected that Mr. Weir, after a hasty survey, went too far. But no less a person than Mr. James Forrestal offers supporting evidence for the Weir statement. Congressman Lindley Beckworth (Texas) put into the Congressional Record (January 8, 1948) the following letter from the Secretary of Defense, dated January 6, 1948. "Dear Mr. Beckworth: Reference is made to your letter of December 17, 1947. War industries include those which produce small arms and ammunition, specific war chemicals and gases, magnesium, primary aluminum and alumina for the purpose of producing aluminum, radioactive materials, hydrogen peroxide above 50 per cent in strength, and beryllium.

"Those peaceful German industries which will be allowed to develop freely within the limits of resources available include furniture and woodwork; bicycles; flat glass, bottle and domestic glass; and potash. Sincerely yours, James Forrestal." (Our emphasis.)

It will be promptly conceded that banning of small arms, ammunition, war gases, etc. should be included in any plan for Germany. It is difficult, however, to square banning of alumina and aluminum (such are its widespread peacetime uses) to any German recovery plan. But the underlined passage that follows is a perfect expression of the Morgenthau thinking, which advocates "pastoralization" and reduction of German industry to production of purely consumer goods such as furniture. Rarely has an official of the Administration revealed so clearly the fact that "only a slightly amended Morgenthau Plan is still in control".

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The Secretary of State is now engaged in a dispute with Congress about the administration of ERP. General Marshall wants complete State Department control of sums voted for European recovery; the Herter Committee wants a body free from State Department control and direction so far as the operation of the program is concerned.

One common argument of those supporting the Marshall view is that the State Department is an organization of experts, versed in diplomacy and economics, with tested experience in foreign affairs, and likely to run ERP with greater foresight than any other body. The record of the Department in assessing world forces, however, hardly supports this claim. Our diplomats failed to learn anything about

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Soviet policy from the Soviet-Nazi honeymoon of 1939-41 (captured German documents on this have just been published). We have in mind a major example of this myopia.

On January 18, Georgi Dimitrov, Bulgarian Communist leader, announced plans for a federation of Danubian and Eastern European States -- which of course will work in the interests of Russian imperialism. (On August 20, 1947, HUMAN EVENTS published an analysis by former Yugoslav Ambassador Fotitch, predicting this move.) We recall, in this connection, the thinking and planning of State Department officials late in 1943, when there was time to foresee and prepare against just such Russian plans. At that time, one of these top rank functionaries wrote a letter embodying the views of himself and others in the Department, on the future of this area. (The letter came in answer to warnings from outside the Department that Soviet Russia might possess its own ideas on the subject.)

These functionaries thought a democratic federation of Danubian Powers should be encouraged. Germany, they pointed out, pursued a policy of "political and economic domination" of the States of this area and the German nation was "incapable of using power wisely and safely". But, "in contrast to this policy, the Soviet Union . . . goes no further than to insist that in Eastern Europe the States may maintain complete autonomy and independence and any form of government which is not hostile to the Soviet Union". The State Department from then on -- through Yalta, Potsdam and the early Byrnes period -- pursued a policy based on the naive expectation that Soviet policy would be happily different from that of Germany. The results of this State Department course are now painfully evident. The Dimitrov plan of a Moscow-dominated federation of these States writes finis to a State Department chapter notable for its lack of ordinary wisdom.

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On January 19, Secretary Forrestal expressed the concern of the armed services about the state of affairs in the Near East. It is not so well known that the situation also worries those who shape the over-all diplomatic, political and especially economic strategy behind the Marshall plan. The public insufficiently realizes that the condition of the Near East has an important bearing on the success of the Marshall plan. It is clearly stated, on page 88 of the State Department's "Outline of European Recovery Program", submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that the role of petroleum in the recovery of Europe is highly important. The document says: "The estimates call for a large and increasing proportion of imports (in Europe) to be supplied by the particular countries themselves, largely through their companies operating in the Middle East. The remainder will be supplied by United States oil companies, chiefly from Caribbean and Middle Eastern fields, with the proportion of Middle Eastern oil increasing as production in that area expands in the later years of the program."

In short, war or extensive disturbances in the Middle East would cut off most of the oil on which Europe counts to implement recovery, and to that extent would impair the operation of the Marshall plan. With U. S. production inadequate to fill current American needs, our output could not fill the gap left by elimination of Middle Eastern exports.

There is little danger that, despite his frequent threats, King Ibn Saud will interfere, in the near future, with the production and export of oil from his territory. However, if all-out war involving the Arab League States should start in earnest, the Arabian monarch might find himself forced to curtail or stop production. Also, if the situation worsens in the Near East, the oil companies may well feel that the risk is too great to justify further investments in pipe lines and oil production in that area. Since the Marshall blueprint is based not only on continued, but on increased supply of Near East oil to Europe, it is understandable that the U. S. Government should become increasingly nervous.

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Book Events

The Great Rehearsal: The Story of the Making and Ratifying of the Constitution, by Carl Van Doren. New York: The Viking Press, $3.75. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

The rather odd and ambiguous title that Mr. Van Doren has given to this history is explained in the preface. The Federal Convention of 1787 was convoked for the purpose of patching up the Articles of Confederation; it ended with the drafting of a covenant which united the thirteen states under a single central authority, to which was delegated the full control of foreign policy and of the general defense and powers to make war and to conclude treaties. Here, then, is an example to the nations of our unhappy world! The Charter of the United Nations, as adopted at San Francisco in 1945, has proved no better suited to the needs of humanity than were the Articles, adopted at Philadelphia in 1778, to the needs of Americans. The moral, therefore, is plain: a General Conference of the United Nations should be summoned to do for the world what Federal Convention did for these United States.

The parallel, Mr. Van Doren admits, is not altogether exact; moreover, as he explains, there is no necessity that the United Nations follow in every particular the precedents of the Federal Convention. But the main point at issue is precisely the same: whether a multitude of sovereignties should be surrendered in the interest of security and peace. On this question Mr. Van Doren has no doubts: it is obvious, he says, "that no difficulty in the way of world government can match the danger of a world without it". Having made this clear, Mr. Van Doren proceeds with his story of the day-to-day progress of the Convention and of the triumphant issue of its labors. Virtually the only source materials for such a story are the journals kept by Mr. Madison, in which he set down abstracts of the arguments for and against the various proposals. Madison's Notes were of course kept chronologically, but some years ago Professor Prescott rearranged them according to the separate subjects of controversy and debate. Much the same plan has been followed here by Mr. Van Doren. He has also made an effort to enliven his dull and abstract paraphrases of the Notes with the few picturesque or curious details that could be abstracted from letters or memoirs. But neither his materials nor his literary skill were equal to this effort; he has, for example, none of that suave irony with which Mr. Harold Nicolson so agreeably coated his narrative of the Congress of Vienna, and Mr. Van Doren succumbs in the end to the academic tedium he sought to avoid.

The tedium, indeed, is enhanced by the way in which Mr. Van Doren has simplified his story in the interest of his moral. There is nowhere any suggestion that the division of opinion within the Federal Convention and in the subsequent state conventions followed the lines of economic interest, that it was the propertied and creditor classes which favored the Constitution as drafted and the small holders and debtors who opposed it. Instead, Mr. Van Doren labors those matters which seem to present the closest analogies to the questions now raised concerning world government, such as the fear of the small states that they would be devoured by the larger, and the question whether representation in the Federal legislature should be equal among the states or proportionate to their inhabitants. There is, as far as I can observe, no attempt by Mr. Van Doren to show how powerfully the proponents of the Virginia Plan had been influenced by Locke and other theorists of the English Revolution nor the extent to which the ultimate form of the Constitution was shaped by English political usages. These points nevertheless are highly relevant; for one of the many respects in which the inhabitants of the thirteen states differed from the inhabitants of the contemporary world is that they inhabited the philosophic climate of the Eighteenth Century; another was in their possession of a common language, a common cultural heritage and a common political tradition.

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